
Vermont Senior Baseball News

The newsletter of the Vermont Senior Baseball League Inc., founded 1984 by Floyd Brown

A hardball league for age 35 and over that plays a safe, fun, and competitive game of baseball in an atmosphere of good sportsmanship
Vol. 4, No. 4

September 2004

edited by Mike Wagner

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Burlington Wins Lower Division

One year after they won the upper division championship the Burlington Cardinals salvaged a disappointing 7-9 regular season by winning the lower division championship. The Cardinals defeated Newport in the finals, 10-5, on September 26 at Barre Town Field.

Newport's Neil Stanzione, who pitched part or all of 3 shutouts during the regular season and had 8 shutout innings against Montpelier in a playoff game, had a 4-1 lead after 4 innings, but then the Cardinals erupted with a 5-run inning that included RBI singles by Brian Stevens and manager Ronn Winn and a sacrifice fly by Todd Hayes, and they added 2 runs in each of the next 2 innings.

Tom Simon had a single, double and triple, and Don Wright, Pat O'Connor and Jim Deeghan also had extra base hits for the Cardinals. Deeghan had to leave the game in the 6th inning after making a great catch in left field and colliding with center fielder Tom Simon.

Don Wright pitched the complete game for the Cardinals, yielding only 6 hits, with 3 walks and 4 strikeouts. Newport was led by Steve Wright with a double and triple, with 1 RBI and 2 runs scored.



Above, Floyd Brown presents the lower division trophy to Burlington Cardinals manager Ronn Winn.

Colchester is New League Champion

On September 19 the Colchester Lakers became the league's 7th different champion in the last 7 years by defeating the Killington Summit Lodge Saints, 6-0, at Montpelier's Recreation Field.

Colchester's Dave Bayko was on the mound the whole way and not only pitched a great game but helped himself with outstanding fielding of his position, with 7 assists and 2 putouts. In the top of the 5th inning he ended Killington's bases loaded, one out threat by striking out Chris Hughes and Robert Chernin for 2 of his 5 strikeouts. In the top of the 7th, after issuing his only walk to load the bases with 2 outs, he caught Scott Matson's liner up the middle. In the top of the 8th inning he started a 1-6-3 double play to end the inning.



Above, the Lakers' Dave Bayko delivers a pitch during the championship game. The second baseman is Jim Yarnell and the umpire is Charlie Barasch.

Brothers Brian and Art Dusablon formed the left side of Colchester's infield and totaled 8 putouts and 6 assists as they consistently denied Killington's efforts to mount an attack. Art Dusablon also drove in his team's first 2 runs with hits in the first and third innings. The Lakers' lead off hitter Doug Cauchon was on base 5 times and scored 2 runs, and Jim Olson pounded 2 doubles and a single.



Above, Brian Dusablon (3B) and Art Dusablon (SS) with center fielder Doug Cauchon. See page 3 for another game photo.

2004 State Championship Game

This year's edition of the State Championship game was played at a new site but had a familiar result. The game was held September 26 at Barre Town Field, as the Colchester Lakers took on Enosburg, champions of the Green Mountain MSBL.

The Lakers, who were the home team, got off on the wrong foot as soon as they took the field, with an uncharacteristic 4 errors in the first inning as they fell behind 8-0. By the time the Lakers' Joe Burkhard, batting last in the order, came to bat for the first time, they trailed 15-0 and Enosburg was already going through their batting order for the 4th time. Burkhard was the starting pitcher for Colchester and lasted into the 3rd inning; none of the runs he gave up were earned as errors continued to haunt his team; by game's end they had amassed 9.

The State Championship game is played with compromise rules that include the Green Mountain MSBL's rule that allows 4 innings to be pitched by players age 40-44. Taking advantage of that, Colchester sent Art Dusablon to the mound in relief, and although he threw hard, his lack of pitching experience during the year showed as he walked 5 batters and hit one. It was clear, though, that 5 years from now the team is going to have another top-notch pitcher for the regular season.

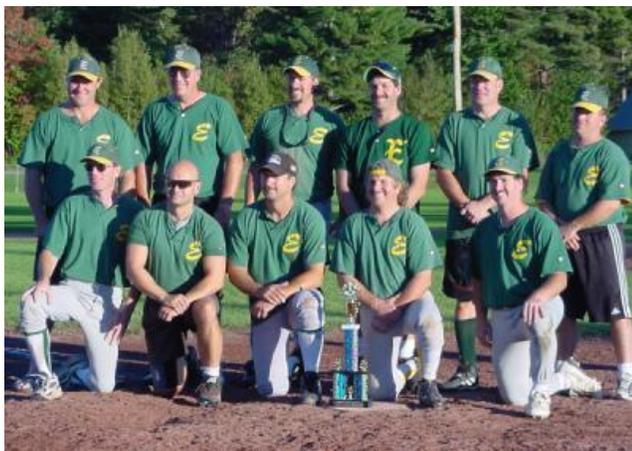
Enosburg, using wood bats for the first time this season, pounded out 22 hits including 4 for extra bases. Randy Ferguson pitched the first 4 innings, followed by Bob Cseh and Kenny Kane. Kane, who stifled Mad River Valley in the 2002 State Championship, pitched only the 9th inning in this year's game, and gave up 4 runs in a last gasp rally by the Lakers, to make the final score 20-6.

Previous results in the State Championship series:

2001: Missisquoi 13, Killington Summit Lodge Saints 6

2002: Enosburg 3, Mad River Valley 2

2003: Missisquoi 16, Burlington Cardinals 6



Above, the 2004 State Championship team. Back row, left to right: Mike Callan, Kenny Kane, Scott Gates, Kevin Boudreau, Jim Bose, Dennis Sheridan. Front row, left to right: Randy Ferguson, Bob Cseh, Darren Plouff, manager Will Sheridan, Larry Gervais. Photo by Virginia Gobats.



Barre manager John Grearson and assistant Frank Tedeschi with their team's first place trophy.

Final Regular Season Standings

	W	L	Pct.	GB
Barre	15	1	.938	----
Williston	13	3	.813	2
Mad River Valley	12	4	.750	3
Morrisville	11	5	.688	4
Killington	11	5	.688	4
Lake Region	11	5	.688	4
Colchester	10	6	.625	5
Jericho	9	6	.600	5.5

South Royalton	8	8	.500	7
Newport	8	8	.500	7
St. Johnsbury	7	8	.467	7.5
Burlington	7	9	.438	8
Chelsea	6	10	.375	9
Champlain	6	10	.375	9
Montpelier	6	10	.375	9
Caledonia	3	13	.188	12
Connecticut Valley	3	13	.188	12
Danville	2	13	.133	12.5
Northfield	2	13	.133	12.5

Games postponed and not rescheduled: 5/23 Northfield at Danville; 8/15 St.J at Jericho.

Postseason Playoffs and Championships

September 5:

Upper Division (teams 1-8) quarterfinals

Barre 8, Jericho 0
Killington 3, Morrisville 2
Lake Region 3, Mad River Valley 2
Colchester 8, Williston 3

Lower Division (teams 9-19) play-in

Champlain 12, Northfield 2
Montpelier 3, Danville 0
Caledonia 6, Connecticut Valley 4

September 12:

Upper Division semifinals

Killington 5, Barre 2
Colchester 6, Lake Region 5

Lower Division quarterfinals

South Royalton 13, Caledonia 5
Burlington 10, Chelsea 0
Newport 8, Montpelier 3
St. Johnsbury 2, Champlain 1 (12 inn.)

September 19:

Upper Division / League Championship

Colchester 6, Killington 0

Lower Division semifinals

Newport 6, St. Johnsbury 5
Burlington 9, South Royalton 0 (forfeit)

September 26:

State Championship

Enosburg 20, Colchester 6

Lower Division Championship

Burlington 10, Newport 5



Photos From the 2004 Season

There were no leaves on the trees yet when these Armadillos came out for their first game on April 29 (below), but the leaves were already turning behind Montpelier's Pete L'esperance at this game on September 12 (right).



Caledonia's Dave Recchia pitched 13 innings during a double header on August 29.



Neil Stanzone played a major role in Newport's resurgence with his best season in years, throwing part or all of 3 shutouts, plus 8 scoreless innings against Montpelier in a playoff game.



Barre's Marc Conti helped his team to a first place finish in the regular season standings in their first season in the league.



In the league championship game, Colchester's Rio Girelli's sacrifice bunt set up the Lakers' 6th run, which was eventually scored by John Martin, who is the runner on first base. Also shown are Killington catcher Jim McKeon, first baseman Greg LaBella and umpire Reggie Lowry.

First League Golf Tournament Held At Basin Harbor Club

On Saturday, September 11, 32 golfers gathered at the historic Basin Harbor Club in Vergennes for the first league-sponsored golf tournament for our baseball players and their guests.

League Secretary Rocky Harlow put a lot of time and effort into organizing the event and selected a great golf course. He also arranged for many prizes, some of which were raffled off while others were won on the course by the best foursome, closest to the pin, and longest drive (separate trophies for men and women).

The scoring format was captain and crew scramble, in which all players hit and then all hit again from the spot of the best shot. There were golfers from many of our baseball teams, including full foursomes from Jericho, Montpelier, Mad River Valley and Williston.

The low score was posted by the group of Greg Bolger, Kris Hardy, Tom Stout and Dave Wark (Bolger, Stout and Wark all play for the Williston Armadillos). Closest to the pin on hole #6 was Rob Harlow. The longest drives on hole #17 were recorded by Wayne Davis and his wife Becky.

Following the morning on the course the golfers were treated to a great buffet lunch in the main dining room overlooking Lake Champlain. The prizes raffled included a trip for two persons to the September 24 Yankees – Red Sox game at Fenway Park, including transportation, game tickets, and lodging.

The league plans to continue the event in 2005, and is open to suggestions from prospective golfers regarding date and location. Please send an email to baseball@neknetwork.com or write to Mike Wagner at PO Box 10, Newport VT 05855.

Below, Rocky Harlow (left) has just presented the trophy for longest drive to Jericho player and league VP Wayne Davis.



Above, the winners trophy was presented by Rocky Harlow (right) to (from left to right) Tom Stout, Kris Hardy, Dave Wark, and Greg Bolger.

Interview: Ron Regis



Ron Regis, the left-handed catcher of the St. Johnsbury Tigers, lives in North Billerica, Massachusetts, and commutes 3 hours each way to his team's games. His twin brother Bob also plays for the Tigers but lives much closer.

We caught up with Ron at a playoff game and asked a few questions. The photos were taken by Wayne Perry of the Northfield North Stars.

VSBN: Have you lived in the Billerica area for a long time? Tom Glavine of the Mets is from Billerica, did you follow his pitching career?

Ron: I think everyone in Billerica has followed both Glavine's and Gary DiSarcina's careers. Tom has made a lot of contributions to local sports programs since he left for pro ball in '85. I never got to know him well since he went straight from high school to the Braves organization, but we do know his sister and brother-in-law pretty well since our kids all went to school together. I grew up in Peabody, MA, and went to school with John Tudor, another pretty fair lefty pitcher.

VSBN: When and where did you play baseball while growing up, and what did you like about baseball as opposed to other sports, or did you like all sports?

Ron: We played whatever sport was in season, but baseball and football were probably the favorites. I only played organized baseball through my early teens because we spent most of our summers in Marblehead, where swimming and water skiing were a lot more popular than team sports. After that it was many years of softball, so until this year it was about 35 years since I took a swing at a baseball. Nothing's changed very much; I still have trouble making solid contact, but they haven't tossed me off the team yet.

VSBN: Why did you want to play in our league and not one closer to home?

Ron: I came up for a visit last summer and saw one of the playoff games. My brother was playing and I already knew a few of the guys on the team through softball games years ago or golf. When I heard they were forming a new team this year, they asked if I wanted to play. I asked what positions were available, and as soon as catcher was mentioned, I decided to give it a shot. I've wanted to play catcher since I was about 8, but being left handed, no one thought it would be a great idea. They put me in center

field and on the mound. These guys were willing to let me give it a try. And they're all great guys. Most teams have at least one pompous, loud mouthed prima donna who talks like Lou Gehrig and plays like Lou Costello. We have one too, but somehow we still like the big ape, and to give him his due, he far and away leads the league in pants. If you hoisted a pair of his baseball pants up a sailboat mast, you could pull 3 water skiers. A good tailor could take his sliding pants and make me a tuxedo.

VSBN: How do you manage the commute from Massachusetts? Do you drive up the night before or do it very early on the morning of a game?

Ron: I usually leave the house between 7 and 8 Sunday morning, depending on where we are playing. I just make sure I have plenty of CDs to listen to, or I can always listen to "North Country Trader" on the radio and see how much a 1988 tractor that needs work is selling for this week. My home games are about 170 miles away, so I can figure on about 3 hours each way. After a while you get used to it.

VSBN: Have you tried pitching in our league?

Ron: Have I ever tried pitching? When the guys read that question it should get a good laugh. The ape will laugh when someone reads it to him. After so many years throwing a softball, a baseball still feels like an aspirin in my hand. The first few weeks of playing, I had no idea where the ball was heading when I'd let it go. Now after 15 games at least I have an idea where it's going. Sometimes it's nowhere near where I was aiming, but we usually find it. Maybe if I stick to baseball long enough, I'll give pitching a thought. But for right now, I really enjoy catching.

VSBN: What kind of work do you do?

Ron: I work as a programmer/analyst writing commercial mortgage software. It wasn't easy making the transition from behind the desk to behind the plate, but as pitiful as I was in the beginning, I've improved a bit (another chuckle from the team ... delayed chuckle from the ape).

VSBN: Tell us a little about your family, and how they feel about your baseball career.

Ron: I have a daughter Jenn who's 23 and in her second year of grad school at the University of Florida, and two sons, Matt, 21, and Shawn, 18. They both attend Clemson University. When I told them I was playing baseball this year, they were all good enough to keep a straight face until they were out of sight. Then I'm sure they burst into hysterical laughter. My wife of 25 years, Sandy, gave me a sideways glance or two and asked if I didn't think I was just a bit out of shape. Since when is oval not a shape? But I showed her. I walked into the house under my own steam after our first game, and didn't have to crawl until she was out of sight and I was heading for the shower. ♦



Above, Bob and Ron Regis of the St. Johnsbury Tigers



Above, Ron in action against the Connecticut Valley Orioles on August 29. The Orioles batter is Pat Riggie.

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor: In one of our games there was a runner on first and a 1-1 count on the batter. The batter hit a foul tip that went into the catcher's glove. The catcher threw the ball down to first base but the runner got back before the throw. But later I got to thinking, why should he throw at all, isn't that a foul ball since it hit the bat and didn't go fair?
Derek J.

Dear Derek,
A foul tip that is caught by the catcher counts the same as a swing and a miss. It's a strike and the ball is in play, so the catcher had the right to try to pick off the runner.

To the Editor: When something happens that is not in our league rules, what's the backup authority for rules? Is it high school rules?
Dan

Dear Dan,
If something is not covered in our rules, first we look at MSBL rules, then at Major League rules. We do not look at high school rules.

Winooski Team to Return in 2005

The Winooski team was one of the original teams in our league when it was started in 1984. The team was not able to get organized for the 2004 season, but will return in 2005, thanks to the efforts of Joe Zadrosny, who played for Winooski for 11 years.

Joe plans to use the team's long-time home field of Hawthorne Field at Winooski High School, and to get one or more sponsors. Right now his greatest need is to hear from players who are interested in joining the team. If you know of a potential player, have them contact the league and their information will be forwarded to Joe.

Send email to: baseball@neknetwork.com or telephone 802-334-7514 or write to PO Box 10, Newport VT 05855

Vermont Senior Baseball News

is published by:

Vermont Senior Baseball League, Inc.

Chairman of the Board of Directors: Floyd Brown
President: Mike Wagner **Vice-President:** Wayne Davis
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Newport VT 05855, or by email to baseball@neknetwork.com

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Next issue: March 2005

Bottom of the Lineup

By Mike Wagner

Dealing With The F-Word

In our league there is one word we don't like to hear, which is forfeit. On September 19, the South Royalton team had a problem. They were scheduled to host a playoff game against the Burlington Cardinals but six of their players were committed to work at an annual community event, the Tunbridge Worlds Fair. Without those players they would not be able to field a team and would have to forfeit the game.

During the week before the game date both Royals manager Gerry Thompson and Cardinals manager Ronn Winn worked hard to come up with a backup plan. They looked at playing the following Saturday, which would be the day before the lower division championship, for which one of them would qualify. They looked at playing during the week under the lights at Barre Town Field, only to discover that field hockey had priority in the eyes of the Town of Barre. They looked at playing very early or very late on Sunday.



Gerry Thompson

Every alternate plan had drawbacks, from lack of an available field to a slew of other players having to miss the game.

Finally on Friday, September 17, I stepped in to decide the issue, and sent a message to both managers thanking them for their efforts and directing that the game be played as originally scheduled. Although one's initial feeling is to help the South Royalton team find a way to play the game, there were other teams and players whose rights had to be considered and who were waiting for word because they had to plan their schedules around their own commitments.

My message included this paragraph: "The problem for the South Royalton team is a previous commitment by some of its players to an important community event. We are a league which respects the family and community commitments which we all have. For example, we sometimes have players leave a game because they are volunteer firemen and they have to respond to a call. Taken in context, these commitments are more important than a baseball game, even a playoff or championship game, and if there is a conflict then it is the baseball game which gives way."

We do not have the resources available to easily resolve a conflict of this type. If we were in a large metropolitan area with a few centralized complexes with several fields in each, with lights for evening games, then an alternative would probably have been easy to arrange. But these teams' players live 80 miles apart, and there is a lack of available fields with lights and a lack of available fields at this time of year even in daylight hours.

There was of course one other way out, to which Gerry alluded in his reply to my message: "... so unless my prayers of a rain filled Sunday come true, then we'll just have to watch from the sidelines. Thanks for a great season fellas. This isn't how my team planned on finishing the season, but life will go on."

And he was right, life did go on. ♦